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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KIGALI 000672

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [EAID](#) [KJUS](#) [RW](#)
SUBJECT: KAGAME LOOKS SET TO WIN 2010 VOTE; NEW PARTIES
EMERGING NONETHELESS

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[1](#)B. KIGALI 623

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Classified By: CDA Anne Casper for reasons 1.4 (b) (d)

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Rwanda is set to hold presidential elections in August 2010. President Paul Kagame is likely to run and win a second seven-year term, and his party dominates the national political landscape. Despite this, several small new political parties and figures have emerged in recent months. The Rwandan government has apparently issued a passport to a Netherlands-based political figure and vociferous critic of Kagame and the Rwandan government. END SUMMARY.

Presidential Elections Set; RPF Rules the Roost

[1](#)2. (SBU) The Government of Rwanda recently announced that presidential elections will take place on August 9, 2010. The official campaign season will last 21 days, starting on July 20, 2010. Incumbent President Paul Kagame is eligible for one more seven-year term. He has not announced his candidacy, but virtually all observers expect him to seek and win another term.

[1](#)3. (SBU) There are ten registered political parties in Rwanda. The largest is Kagame's own Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF), which won at least 79% of all votes during 2008's national legislative elections (Ref A) and dominates political Rwandan political life. Eight small parties are allied to the RPF in parliament and government. Two of these, the Liberal Party (PL) and Social Democratic Party (PSD), competed against the RPF for legislative seats in 2008 and have cabinet representation. The constitution states that if a political party holds more than half the seats in the lower chamber, it cannot have more than half of all cabinet positions. Accordingly, 11 of the GOR's 22 ministers are independents or members of political parties other than the RPF.

New Parties: PS-Imberakuri, Greens, ADRUIA

[1](#)4. (C) Within the past several months, three new parties have emerged in Rwanda. The Imberakuri Social Party (PS-Imberakuri), led by Bernard Ntanganda, a lawyer and an ethnic Hutu, successfully registered as a political party in July. In August, police in Ruhango district detained for three days a PS-Imberakuri party member and teacher, who reportedly discussed politics with his students. Embaffs met with acting Rwanda National Police Commissioner Mary Gahonzire on October 7 and expressed concern about the

arrest; Gahonzire explained that the teacher, whom she characterized as inciting students, told the students "Rwanda was like a man tied to a tree, and the PS-Imberakuri wanted to untie the ropes." (Note: Rwandan laws and the code of conduct for political parties forbid activities that potentially lead to conflict, such as forming a party on the basis of ethnicity, region or clan, or promoting hatred and conflicts among Rwandans. End note.) Authorities did not press charges, but PS-Imberakuri report that district officials fired the man from his job.

15. (C) Two other would-be parties, the Democratic Green Party of Rwanda (DGPR) and the ADRUIA or "Agathe's party," are still unregistered. The DGPR, led by Frank Habineza and Charles Kabanda, both Anglophone Tutsis, launched itself in a high-profile manner in mid-August, by holding a press conference and ceremony at one of the most expensive hotels in Kigali. Habineza told police October 4 he was "surprised" police did not break up that meeting since the DGPR was unregistered. (Comment: It is unclear whether the DGPR was deliberately trying to provoke authorities. End comment). He and Kabanda said that despite the difficulties they had encountered so far (Ref B), they intended to follow the letter of the law in their efforts to achieve legal registration. The ADRUIA party takes its name, in part, after former prime minister and moderate Hutu Agathe Umwilingiyimana, a victim of the 1994 genocide. When Emboffs met with ADRUIA in mid-August, the party's leaders expressed support for the GOR and its policies, wanted to take part in governing the country and do even better, but otherwise had no discernable platform or ideology.

Disapora Opposition Figures

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16. (C) Among the Rwandan diaspora, Netherlands-based Victoire Ingabire, a Hutu who was a junior civil servant in Rwanda's pre-genocide government of the early 1990s and who leads an umbrella grouping called the United Democratic Front-Ikingi (FDU), has announced her intention to run for the presidency. (Note: The FDU's website describes the GOR as a "sectarian-military dictatorship." Ingabire herself is a strident critic of Kagame who opposes military action against the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), an armed group operating in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. End Note.) Post understands Rwandan immigration authorities recently issued Ingabire a passport, enabling her to travel to Rwanda, but they have not yet issued passports to several members of Ingabire's entourage. According to a colleague from the Dutch Embassy, Ingabire apparently did not provide all the required documents in support of her application, and the Rwandan embassy in The Hague and/or Kigali-based immigration authorities may also have deliberately delayed issuing the passport. Another possible candidate is Belgium-based Paul Rusesabagina, a Hutu whose experiences during the 1994 genocide were the basis for the movie "Hotel Rwanda," and who in recent months has actively campaigned against Rwanda's bid to join the Commonwealth.

17. (C) COMMENT: At present, there are no serious challengers for the presidency. In terms of organization, resources, and influence in government and media, the RPF towers over the other political parties. However, senior Rwandan decision-makers appear to recognize that it is in Rwanda's interest to allow other parties to operate: they approved the registration of the PS-Imberakuri, decided to hold its party member no longer than legally permissible, allowed the DGPR's August 14 launching ceremony to proceed, and reportedly issued of a passport to arch-critic Ingabire. We expect political figures in Rwanda and abroad to continue to press the envelope on political freedoms in the run-up to the elections next August. Post will continue to work with officials from all parties through USAID and Millennium Challenge Corporation-related programs, and will continue to

urge the GOR to observe its own rules permitting lawful
political activity. END COMMENT.
CASPER